

Message Text

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INFO PANCANAL
USSOUTHCOM

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, ELAB, PN
SUBJ: ANONYMOUS AD ACCUSES US ARMY AND ZONE COURT OF
FABRICATING EVIDENCE AND UNJUSTLY SENTENCING PANAMANIAN
WORKER IN COROZAL PX

SUMMARY: LOCAL DAILY "CRITICA" SEPTEMBER 7 RAN A FULL
PAGE "AD" ENTITLED "ZONIANS PROMOTE DISCRIMINATION,
REVANCHISM AND PERSECUTION CAMPAIGN TO DISCREDIT
PANAMANIAN IN THE CANAL ZONE - ZONIANS HELP GUARD
REACTIONARY ATTITUDE TOWARDS TORRIJOS-CARTER TREATY -
ZONE COURTS VIOLATE HUMAN RIGHTS OF PANAMANIAN - AND
PROHIBITION OF SPANISH LANGUAGE IN CERTAIN BRANCHES OF
THE OFFICES IN THE CANAL ZONE. ALTHOUGH FOCUSED ON ONE
CASE -- A PANAMANIAN CASHIER AT COROZAL PX AND THREE
OTHER WOMEN (TWO PANAMANIAN AND ONE NORTH AMERICAN) --
THE AD CHARGES THAT THIS INCIDENT IS PART OF A "CAMPAIGN
OF TERROR AGAINST PANAMANIAN WORKING IN THE PX'S AND
OTHER AREAS OF THE CANAL ZONE". EMBASSY IS LOOKING INTO
THE ALLEGED INCIDENT ITSELF AS WELL AS DISCUSSING THESE
UNSIGNED RABBLE-ROUSING ALLEGATIONS WITH GOP OFFICIALS
AND OTHER APPROPRIATE PARTIES. END SUMMARY.

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1. IN WHAT IT DESCRIBES AS A "TYPICAL CASE OF ZONIAN
JUSTICE" THE AD CLAIMS THAT A YOUNG PANAMANIAN CASHIER
WAS ACCUSED OF "CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE ECONOMIC
INTERESTS" OF THE PX, INTERROGATED AND TRIED WITH
"FABRICATED EVIDENCE" BEFORE A WHITE ZONIAN JURY WITH
"RACIST PROPENSITIES" (THE CASHIER IS BLACK) AND
SENTENCED TO THREE YEARS IMPRISONMENT. THE ARTICLE ALSO

ALLEGES THAT THE JURY RETIRED TO THEIR HOMES TO DELIBERATE AND THAT UPON HER LAWYER'S APPEAL, BAIL WAS SET AT USDOLS 3,500 AT 4:30 PM ON A FRIDAY (AFTER BANK CLOSING HOURS). THE "STORY" ADDS THAT THE YOUNG WOMAN WAS STRIPPED AND INSULTED DURING HER INTERROGATION.

2. THE AD THEN ASKS "WHAT IS BEHIND ALL THIS" AND ANSWERS THAT THE ARREST AND TRIAL WERE AIMED AT MAKING THE YOUNG WOMAN AND THREE OTHERS THE SCAPEGOAT FOR A SHORTFALL OF USDOLS 500,000 DISCOVERED BY AUDITORS OF THE COROZAL PX. THE AD CLAIMS THAT SOMETIME AFTER THIS "FALSE IMPLICATION" OF THE WOMEN, THE PX "LOST" USDOLS 290,000 MORE. THE ZONIANS, CONTINUES THE AD, HOPE TO RESOLVE THIS SERIOUS PROBLEM BY IMPLICATING THREE WOMEN. THEY ARE FAILING TO INVESTIGATE THE ROOTS OF THIS PROBLEM BECAUSE OF THE "LARGE FISH" INVOLVED. FOR THESE (ZONIANS) THE PANAMANIAN ARE THIEVES AND IMMORAL PERSONS AS THE COROZAL PX DIRECTOR RICHARD BALIUS ONCE DECLARED AND LATER WAS OBLIGED TO RETRACT.

3. THE AD CLAIMS THAT A CAMPAIGN OF TERROR EXISTS AGAINST PANAMANIAN WORKERS IN THE ZONE AS ZONIANS BECOME INCREASINGLY NERVOUS OVER LOSING PRIVILEGES THEY HAVE ENJOYED SINCE 1903. IN REVENGE AGAINST PANAMANIAN, THE ARTICLE STATES, ZONIANS INSULT THE PANAMANIAN WORKERS AND LOOK FOR ANY PRETEXT TO SUSPEND THEM FROM THEIR JOBS. THEY (THE ZONIANS) ARE WAGING A PSYCHOLOGICAL WAR TRYING TO HALT THE GOOD PROGRESS BEING MADE TOWARDS IMPLEMENTA-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TION OF THE TREATY. AS "EVIDENCE" OF THIS ATTITUDE, THE AD CITES THE COMPLAINT OF DR. ROMULO ESCOBAR BETHANCOURT AGAINST INTERRUPTION OF FREE TRANSIT OF THE CANAL (PANAMA 5542) AND THE RECENT OIL SPILL.

IT ALLEGES THAT MANY PANAMANIAN ARE BEING CONDEMNED UNJUSTLY AND WITHOUT IMPARTIAL TRIAL. THE ARTICLE ADDS THAT IN THE LEGAL OFFICE OF FORT AMADOR UNDER LTC HAROLD E. HARRIS SPANISH IS PROHIBITED DURING OFFICE HOURS.

4. PANAMANIAN "SUFFERING FROM THIS CAMPAIGN" DEMAND THAT THE GOVERNMENT INTERVENE IN THIS MATTER, RAISING THE MATTER IN WASHINGTON, WITH THE US EMBASSY IN PANAMA AND CANAL ZONE AUTHORITIES. THE AD CLAIMS THAT ITS AUTHOR(S) WAITED IN ORDER TO AVOID PREJUDICING THE TREATY IMPLEMENTATION. HOWEVER THEY ARE NOW SEEKING JUSTICE AND RELIEF FOR "THOUSANDS" OF PANAMANIAN FROM THE UNCERTAINTY AND CLIMATE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TERROR CREATED BY "REACTIONARY ZONIANS AND THEIR ALLIES IN THE US".

5. THE ARTICLE CONCLUDES BY STATING THAT THE NORTH AMERICAN WOMAN IMPLICATED WAS EXERCISING AUTHORIZED DISCRETION IN LOWERING PRICES OF CERTAIN ARTICLES AND THAT THE WOMAN IS SUFFERING PHYSICALLY, MORALLY AND

FINANCIALLY FROM THE CHARGES. THE OTHER PANAMANIAN WOMEN INVOLVED HAVE NOTHING WHATSOEVER TO DO WITH THE CASE, THE AD CONTENTS.

6. A SEPARATE BUT CONCEIVABLY RELATED NEWS ARTICLE IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY "STAR AND HERALD" SEPTEMBER 13 ANNOUNCED A MEETING SEPTEMBER 14 OF LOCAL 907 (ASCME UNION OF CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES OF DOD) AT THE COROZAL STORE CAFETERIA. THE MEETING IS CALLED "SINCE WORKING CONDITIONS AT THE EXCHANGE ARE DETERIORATING BECAUSE OF UNFAIR ACTIONS OF SOME MANAGERS."

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7. COMMENT: WE CONSIDER THE ANONYMOUS RABBLE-ROUSING IN A GOVERNMENT-SUBSIDIZED PAPER TO BE INJURIOUS TO THE CREATION OF AN ATMOSPHERE CONDUCIVE TO PEACEFUL AND EFFECTIVE TREATY IMPLEMENTATION. WE HAVE SAID SO TO FABREGA. (WE ALSO DOUBT THAT THE "AD" WAS ACTUALLY PAID FOR, BUT RATHER SUSPECT IT MAY BE A GIFT OF THE MANAGEMENT.) WE CONSIDER THIS AND OTHER OUTBURSTS SUCH AS ESCOBAR'S SPEECH TO THE ZONE WORKERS A POTENTIAL SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION BETWEEN AMBASSADOR POPPER AND GENERAL DOLVIN WITH THE PANAMANIAN NEXT WEEK. WE CAN DISCUSS ON MONDAY. (UNFORTUNATELY, THE TEXT OF THE "AD" SUGGESTS THE SOURCE OF THIS PARTICULAR JOB ON THE ZONIANS MAY WELL BE THE WORK OF A U.S.G. EMPLOYEE IN THE ZONE.) DIKEOS

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